Borden, Robert - Laird June - July, 1919 (044)

Memorandum on Financial Assistance for Returned Men.

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden, G.C.M.G.,

Prime Minister of Canada.

Sir:

At a meeting of the Conference of the Universities of Canada held in Ottawa on Friday, May 23rd, 1919, the undersigned were appointed a committee to lay before you the unanimous and earnest petition of the Conference that your Government should grant financial assistance to those soldiers who having served overseas desire to resume and continue their education and prove their capability for doing so.

We will endeavour to set forth the facts and reasons upon which this petition is based. It is well known to you that the voluntary enlistment from the educational institutions of the Dominion was very large. In some Faculties the attendance was reduced to one-fifth of what it was before the war, and the losses by death have been so heavy that in the not distant future there will be a shortage of men in those walks of life which depend upon superior education. The welfare of the country therefore demands that as many as possible of our returned soldiers should be induced to complete their interrupted education and to undergo as high a grade of training as is within their reach. It is by education that Canada will hold a place in the world that the intelligence and valour of her sons have won for her. Competition will be keen, but we need not fear it if we develope the natural ability of our

people. Our greatest danger in this respect will be that too few instead of too many of our soldiers will seek an education, the loss of several years overseas having created an impatience on the part of many to earn a livelihood as soon as possible.

An objection has been raised that our request involves class legislation. We fail to see the force of this objection. Education is surely not the prerogative of any class or section of the people. As for the highest grades of education in no country is a university career more widely open and more fully entered upon by young men and women from every social class than in Canada. Students come from the farm, from the home of the artisan, business man, clergyman, teacher, doctor, lawyer, and it is safe to say that taking the Dominion as a whole more than one-half of the students have to earn enough to help themselves through college. This last fact makes the case of the returned soldier particularly hard, for many a boy had just left school with enough money to put himself through the first year or two of a university career, or was in the middle of his course and had barely enough to make ends meet. When the war came these students in the university centres, which were so active in recruiting, heard the loud call of duty and enlisted without a thought of their future. They have therefore lost not only the years of war, but the wherewithal to support themselves when they come back. It would be a poor return that the country would make were she to refuse to help such men and thus demand the further and uncalled for sacrifice of abandoning their desired career.

Such action on the part of the Government would not, it seems to us, involve that financial help should also be granted to returned soldiers in trade or business. The man who is being educated is on an entirely different basis because during the period of his education he must spend instead of earn. For several years there would be an outflow instead of an income. Even when his education is completed the ex-soldier will be unable for some time to earn more than a meagre living. Indeed the any register of ~~any of the~~ university graduates will show that the vast majority of them hold positions that bring in only a moderate income. We believe that to give an education to those who desire it and can profit by it is the best kind of repatriation, for it means a saving for the country of the services of men ~~in~~ for those callings in which they can be of most advantage both to themselves and to the country. What is spent upon education brings large returns in manhood. Education is the strength of a democracy.

Moreover, we can point in support of our petition to what is being done in Britain. The Government is setting aside an immense sum for the higher education of the soldier and that with the fullest concurrence of the labour party. So generous is Britain that she is educating at public cost young Canadians who have been in the British service. We know of several who returning home and finding no financial help here have gone back to Britain to be educated at the expense of the British tax-payer. That this should have happened is not creditable to Canada.

In Australia also the Government has taken the following action:

Where an applicant for assistance produces evidence to

the satisfaction of the State Board that he had, prior to enlistment, entered or intended to enter upon a university course or other course of professional training, the State Board may grant to the applicant assistance.

Provided that an applicant who had not before enlistment entered upon such a course shall only be granted assistance if-

(a) He is not more than 30 years of age at the date of his application, and

(b) He applies for the assistance within six months after his discharge.

Where the State Board is satisfied that assistance should be granted the State Board may, if it approves of the course selected:

(a) Pay by way of gift from time to time the fees payable in connection with the course.

(b) Grant to the applicant, by way of loan, such sum as is necessary to purchase the books, instruments, and other articles required by him in connection with his course.

(c) Pay to the applicant by way of gift or loan such allowance as will insure to him a weekly income (inclusive of his own pension) of 42s. for each academic year of his course.

Canada surely surely will not lag behind Britain and Australia in this matter.

Our proposal is that the Government should grant every returned soldier who can prove his need and his capability, maintenance and fees for at least one year. The sum of $350 should suffice for subsistence and at the highest the fees should not average more than $150. In view of the fact that there are

probably at least 1000 returned soldiers now in the higher educational institutions of Canada and about the same number undergoing instruction either in the Khaki University or in British Universities, it is probable that not less than 2500 or 3000 may be expected to seek an education next winter in our Canadian institutions. The amount therefore that may be required for carrying out this scheme should be placed at $1,500,000.

The simplest method for ~~carrying~~ putting the proposal into ~~effect~~ practice would be to extend the machinery of the Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment in co-operation with the Universities, Technical Schools, and ~~selected~~ High Schools of the Provinces.

It is to be observed that in making this petition the Universities are not putting forward any request for financial relief on their own behalf. Already extra classes of all grades have been instituted for returned soldiers at ~~greatly increased~~ large expense of which the fees will meet but a ~~very small~~ fraction. But by reason of their deep conviction of the necessity of educating the soldier the Universities have assumed this heavy burden in addition to those that the war has already laid upon them. They can therefore with good conscience ask that the Dominion Government should make it possible for all capable returned soldiers who desire to do so to take advantage of the opportunities which they afford.

~~On behalf of~~ All of which we respectfully & We remain Yours ~~Sincerely~~

Concurred in by
W.L.R

S.S.

401

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
CANADA

Ottawa, Ont. July 16th, 1919

Confidential.

Dear Sir Robert Falconer,-

I hope to receive from you information as to the Australian arrangements for assistance to Students in Universities. My impression is that such assistance has been from Provincial sources and not from the Federal Government.

Since Prorogation we have had an opportunity of discussing the question and we see very great difficulties in entering upon a policy of general aid to returned men attending or desiring to attend Universities. I am quite in sympathy with every reasonable endeavour to assist higher education and I realize the loss to our national life in the absence of students who spent two or more years on active service at the Front when otherwise they would have been pursuing a University course. But the resources of the Federal Exchequer are already taxed very severely, and we all foresee a tremendous outcry and disturbance of public opinion if we should make general provision for assistance to Students at Universities and should fail to make the like general provision for vocational training for assistance in embarking upon business enterprises, etc. The people of the country have been accustomed to regard the resources of the Federal Treasury as quite unlimited; and if assistance of this character is granted I do not know at what point we could stop.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

CANADA

You may remember that we have already made provision for assistance to Students who enlisted under the age of eighteen. A recommendation to Council fixing the rate and scope of such assistance is now under consideration.

Yours faithfully,

R. L. Borden.

Sir Robert Falconer,

President Toronto University,

Toronto, Ont.

President's Office.

June 7th, 1919

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden, G.C.M.G.,

Prime Minister of Canada.

Sir: MEMORANDUM ON FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR RETURNED MEN.

At a meeting of the Conference of the Universities of Canada held in Ottawa on Friday, May 23rd, 1919, the undersigned were appointed a committee to lay before you the unanimous and earnest petition of the Conference that your Government should grant financial assistance to those soldiers who having served overseas desire to resume and continue their education and prove their capability for doing so.

We will endeavour to set forth the facts and reasons upon which this petition is based. It is well known to you that the voluntary enlistment from the educational institutions of the Dominion was very large. In some Faculties the attendance was reduced to one-fifth of what it was before the war, and the losses by death have been so heavy that in the not distant future there will be a shortage of men in those walks of life which depend upon superior education. The welfare of the country therefore demands that as many as possible of our returned soldiers should be induced to complete their interrupted education and to receive as high a grade of training as is within their reach. It is through education that Canada will hold the place in the world that the intelligence

and valour of her sons have won for her. Competition will be keen, but we need not fear it if we develope the natural ability of our people. Our greatest danger in this respect will be that too few instead of too many of our soldiers will seek an education, the loss of several years overseas having created an impatience on the part of many to earn a livelihood as soon as possible.

An objection has been raised that our request involves class legislation. We fail to see the force of this objection. Education is surely not the prerogative of any class or section of the people. As for the highest grades of education, in no country is a university career more widely open and more fully entered upon by young men and women from every social class than in Canada. Students come from the farm, from the home of the artisan, business man, clergyman, teacher, doctor, lawyer, and it is safe to say that taking the Dominion as a whole more than one-half of the students have to earn enough to help themselves through college. This last fact makes the case of the returned soldier particularly hard, for many a boy had just left school with enough money to put himself through the first year or two of a university career, or was in the middle of his course with barely enough to make ends meet. When the war came these students in the university centres, which were so active in recruiting, heard the loud call of duty and enlisted without a thought of their future. They have therefore lost not only the years of war, but the wherewithal to support themselves when they come back. It would be a poor return that the country would make were she to refuse to help such men and thus demand the further and uncalled for sacrifice of abandoning their desired career.

Such action on the part of the Government would not, it seems to us, involve that financial help should also be granted to returned soldiers in trade or business. The man who is being educated is on an entirely different basis because during the period of his education he must spend instead of earn. For several years there would be an outflow instead of an income. Even when his education is completed the ex-soldier will be unable for some time to earn more than a meagre living. Indeed any register of university graduates will show that the vast majority of them hold positions that bring in only a moderate income. We believe that to give an education to those who desire it and can profit by it is the best kind of repatriation, for it means a saving for the country of the services of men for those callings in which they can be of most advantage both to themselves and to the country. What is spent upon education brings large returns in manhood. Education is the strength of a democracy.

Moreover, we can point in support of our petition to what is being done in Britain. The Government is setting aside an immense sum for the higher education of the soldier and that with the fullest concurrence of the Labour Party. So generous is Britain that she is educating at public cost young Canadians who have been in the British service. We know of several who returning home and finding no financial help here have gone back to Britain to be educated at the expense of the British tax-payer. That this should have happened is not creditable to Canada.

In Australia also the Government has taken the following action: Where an applicant for assistance produces evidence to

the satisfaction of the State Board that he had, prior to enlistment, entered or intended to enter upon a university course or other course of professional training, the State Board may grant to the applicant assistance.

Provided that an applicant who had not before enlistment entered upon such a course shall only be granted assistance if- (a) He is not more than 30 years of age at the date of his application, and (b) He applies for the assistance within six months after his discharge.

Where the State Board is satisfied that assistance should be granted the State Board may, if it approves of the course selected:
(a) Pay by way of gift from time to time the fees payable in connection with the course.
(b) Grant to the applicant, by way of loan, such sum as if necessary to purchase the books, instruments, and other articles required by him in connection with his course.

(c) Pay to the applicant by way of gift such allowance as will insure him a weekly income (inclusive of his own pension) of 42s. for one academic year, including the period ordinarily required to enable him to attend the qualifying examination for that year.

(d) Pay to the applicant by way of loan such allowance as will insure to him a weekly income (inclusive of pension) of 42s. for each subsequent academic year of his course, including the period ordinarily required to enable him to attend the qualifying examination for that year.

Provided that no allowance shall be paid under this regulation during the period between the termination of one academic year and the commencement of the next, except for such periods as the attendance of the applicant at the University or other institution is compulsory.

The applicant shall give personal security for the re-payment of the amounts granted under paragraphs (b) and (d) of the last preceding sub-regulation.

The continuance of the granting of the assistance provided by sub-regulation (2) shall be subject to the receipt from time to time by the State Board from the University or other institution of a report that the applicant is making satisfactory progress with his studies.

Canada surely will not lag behind Britain and Australia in this matter.

Our proposal is that the Government should grant every returned soldier who can prove his need and his capability, maintenance and fees for at least one year. The sum of at least $350 would be required for subsistence, and at the highest the fees should not average more than $150. In view of the fact that there are probably at least 1000 returned soldiers now in the higher

educational institutions of Canada and about the same number undergoing instruction either in the Khaki University or in British Universities, it is probable that not less than 2500 or 3000 may be expected to seek an education next winter in our Canadian institutions. The amount therefore that may be required for carrying out this scheme should be placed at $1,500,000.

The machinery for putting the proposal into operation would in our opinion not be elaborate. The Government might deal directly with the Universities as regards the students who wish to take a university career and with the Provincial Departments of Education as regards those who wish to take a training in Technical or High Schools of the Provinces.

It is to be observed that in making this petition the Universities are not putting forward any request for financial relief on their own behalf. Already extra classes of all grades have been instituted for returned soldiers at large expense of which the fees will meet but a fraction. But by reason of their deep conviction of the necessity of educating the soldier the Universities have assumed this heavy burden in addition to those that the war has already laid upon them. They can therefore with good conscience ask that the Dominion Government should make it possible for all capable returned soldiers who desire to do so to take advantage of the opportunities which they afford.

[Concurred in by W. A. R. Kerr, ~~Acting President~~ of the

University of Alberta.

J. J. Tompkins, of the University of St. Francis Xavier.

Joseph Sirois, ~~Professor~~ of Laval University.

R. F. Ruttan, of McGill University.

All of which is respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee.

CHAIRMAN.

Concurred in

406

July 19th. 1919

Sir Robert Gordon, G.C.M.G.,

Prime Minister of Canada.

Sir:

I am directed by Sir Robert Falconer to send you the enclosed dealing with the regulations as to grants to student soldiers in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

President's Secretary.

University of Toronto
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

July 21. 1919

Dear Mr. Premier,

I wish to thank you for your letter of July 16 which was forwarded to me at my summer home. I telegraphed to my secretary to send you at once the complete copy of the Australian regulations with regard to assistance for returned soldiers as I have them. It had not occurred to me until you suggested it that the regulations were issued by the State, but you will at once recognize whether that is the case. If so I should infer that all the States have taken the same action, and would they do this without federal suggestion and aid?

Of course I am greatly disappointed that the government is unlikely to take action in accordance with the petition of the universities, for our memorandum simply gave expression to a very earnest & widespread hope based upon a sense of need which is emphasised by almost daily applications for assistance.

At the Conference of the Universities held in May it was resolved that our memorandum should be made public after the Government had been able to give it careful consideration, because we believed that we owed it to our constituencies to let those interested know what efforts we were making on their behalf. You will I hope accept my assurance that our endeavour to obtain publicity was not intended to embarrass the government, though possibly a widespread favourable opinion might help us in our efforts.

With sincere respect.

Yours

N.W.R.